

Dear SOMHELP Members,

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month! This is the subject that no one likes to discuss, but that everyone should discuss. There are a variety of different tests available – please take the time to talk to your doctor about this at your next visit.

These tests can save your life! **Nearly 80% of colorectal cancer could be prevented.**

Colorectal cancer is common in Montana: 475 people are newly diagnosed and 175 people die from it each year. The risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with advancing age. More than 90% of cases occur in people aged 50 or older.

National guidelines emphasize that **all adults age 50 years and older at average risk should participate in some form of screening – if you have risk factors (a family history among them) your doctor may recommend you get screened sooner.** Several tests are available to screen for colorectal cancer. Some are used alone; others are used in combination with each other. Talk with your doctor about which test or tests are best for you.

- Colonoscopy (every 10 years)
- Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) (every year)
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy (every 5 years)
- Double-Contrast Barium Enema (every 5 years)

Other tests are currently being evaluated and may be recommended for use in colorectal cancer screening in the future, including CT colonography (also known as “virtual colonoscopy”) and stool DNA testing.

Get regular colon cancer screening. If you are on the State of Montana medical plan, you have colorectal cancer screening benefits!

For sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, double-barium contrast enemas:

- Traditional*: No deductible, member pays 25%, \$500 maximum for sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy.
- Managed care*: Applies to deductible, then member pays 25%.

**Please call your plan administrator if you have any questions! These benefits are based on routine, in-network services and allowable amounts.*

Information contained in the SOMHELP e-mails is general in nature, and not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. As always, you should consult with your healthcare provider before making any changes.

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